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ABSTRACT

Articles on women's studies and females in higher education are presented in this publication. A University of North Dakota project that sought to promote the integration of new research and scholarship results into the curriculum is described in "Women's Equity Committee Offers a Model Project," (Leola Furman, Robert Young). Historical perspectives on the exclusion of the contributions of women in college studies and current biases toward women as students and teachers are addressed in "We're Not Pretending Anymore: Women's Studies in the Curriculum" (Sheryl O'Donnell). Past, present, and future issues concerning math education for women are covered in "Women's Math Problems Can Be Solved," (David J. Uherka). Perspectives of a woman journalist on doing a professional job and the prospects for women in top executive positions in society are offered in "Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch" (Jessie Goddard). Additional articles and contributors include: "Portrait of a Powerful Female Leader in Brittany, France" (Martha Kay Parker); "Emma Mott, Lady Instructor, 1884-85" (Elizabeth Hampsten); "Rural Teaching Is Not Safe" (Charles McCanna's 1944 letter); and "The Study of Women Proceeds" (Sandra Donaldson). A list of publications concerning women's studies is included. (SW)

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SEPTEMBER 1981
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PLAINSWOMAN

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Emma Mott
Lady Instructor, 1884

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This Month's Feature

Women in Higher Education

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expanded issue

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Plainswoman

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Our new look

With this expanded issue, Plainswoman begins its 5th volume and 5th year of publishing. This month we feature Women in Higher Education. Our cover highlights one such woman, Emma Mott (with fan), literally and symbolically embodying the emergence of women in higher level educational institutions. Her story, while gratifying as the story of an individual, serves also as a larger example of the problems faced by female educators pioneering in rural universities.

As in the past, Plainswoman continues to offer its readers a regional perspective and interpretation of issues that have national (and international) significance. We do not consider ourselves primarily a "news" source in the conventional sense, although our back page Calendar is intended to contribute to women's networking. We exist, rather, to provide readers with a sense of place, locale, region and area as it influences various aspects of our lives and our perceptions of ourselves in historical, economic, cultural, political, and environmental ways.

This focus for Plainswoman has led us to alter our front cover "look," as our longer term subscribers will notice. We want to adopt a bolder focus on the publication title. For new readers we want to be seen on the shelf, and for old readers to signal that we are changing in important ways. To reflect better our issue content, we hope the new look will match with longer articles, underscored regionalism, and a focus on the Plains area as well as on North Dakota. John Vlock, our artist/graphic designer, sought to arrive at a design that would frame each issue with itself, so to speak. He opened up the print at the bottom of the title to include all that is to follow, on the cover and throughout the issue. In this way, the new graphics do not attempt to *define* a plainswoman, but suggest, more simply, that the publication itself deals with regional influences that shape and indeed constitute women in the Plains areas of this country.

We are in the first stages of a subscription drive to stabilize finances and enlarge our readership. Would you help by talking to a friend or sharing this issue with someone? An individual reader's personal influence and information exceed the best of all "mailing lists," and we do indeed need your help. We also seek articles, literature, and art. Below each month's table of contents, you will find a list of the areas of emphasis in forthcoming issues, with submission deadlines. We would be delighted to hear from you.

COMING IN OCTOBER: WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

"FUNNY THINGS HAPPEN ON THE WAY TO EQUALITY"
by Marianne Bruesehoff

"CEREMONY," a story by Reva Griffith

An interview with Evelyn Landes, President of American Agri-Women, by Gerri Sayler

This issue of PLAINSWOMAN is funded by the Office of Instructional Development at the University of North Dakota through a grant to the Women's Equity Committee. Guest editors are Sheryl O'Donnell and Barbara Shaver.

Women's Equity Committee offers a model project

by Leola Furman and Robert Young

Every course in the university should concern itself with Women's Studies. Every teacher should be a developer of the potential of women students. These ideas were the goals of a Women's Equity Committee curriculum project at the University of North Dakota (where WEC is a standing Vice Presidential committee that responds to women's concerns on campus).

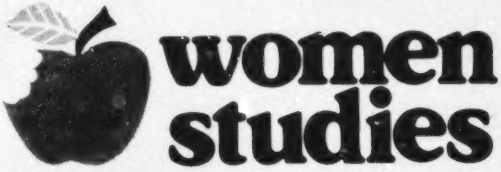
Recently women's lives, experiences, and contributions have been illuminated through scholarship in many forms. And virtually every discipline has been affected by this new knowledge. The experiences of women students in higher education also has been better understood. And new approaches and new attitudes toward the education of these students have been recommended. With these developments in mind, the Curriculum Project set out to stimulate, educate, assist, and reward faculty members at the University of North Dakota who would bring such new scholarship and new approaches into their teaching.

With support from the Office of Instructional Development, the Women's Equity Committee Curriculum Subcommittee designed a project that had four objectives. Faculty members would 1) become more knowledgeable about new research and scholarship on women, particularly in their own disciplines; 2) develop ways of integrating this knowledge into their courses; 3) explore, with other faculty members, some of the issues raised by new research and scholarship on women, and 4) better understand and meet the needs of women students at the university. Twenty faculty members, spanning all the colleges at the university, participated. Last spring they attended three one-day workshops that focused both on content and on educational strategies. These included an introduction to Women's Studies by Catharine Stimpson (professor of English and founding editor of *Signs: A Journal of Women in Culture and Society*); a seminar on women and science led by Carl Tomizuka (University of Arizona professor of physics and specialist in math anxiety); and a seminar on women in the social sciences run by Marcia Westcott (professor of biology and Associate Dean of Arts and Letters at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs).

In addition to attending the seminars, participants completed a project which would in some way further the objectives of the overall project. Topics included curricular and course development in science, languages, anthropology, social work, music education, business, nursing, and multi-cultural education. Participants also developed essays on women's studies, women's career development, equal opportunity, and the economic status of women. (See listing of titles and authors that follows.) These essays are being compiled into a resource book to be available to other educators.

The Curriculum Subcommittee made a special effort to document and evaluate the project. Its real success will not be known until the participants have an opportunity to try out the courses revised and the new strategies for assisting their women students' development. If the results do prove significant then the approach taken by the Women's Equity Committee at the University of North Dakota might provide a helpful model for other colleges and universities and even secondary schools.

For more information about the curriculum project or resource book, contact any of the following persons at the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, ND 58202: Lee Furman, Chair of WEC (Social Work Department), Robert Young (Director of Instructional Development), Handbook editors Sheryl [illegible]onnell (English Department) and Barbara Shaver (Hu[illegible]ies).



CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN WOMEN'S STUDIES

Janet Goldenstein Ahler, "The Issue of Sexism in Multicultural Education"

Sandra Donaldson, Brochure on Incorporating Women's Studies into the Traditional Undergraduate Curriculum

Dennis J. Elbert, "The Potential for Joint Training Sessions on Women's Equity Issues in a Coeducational Business Curriculum.

Leola Furman, "Integrating Women's Issues into the Course, 'Human Behavior in the Social Environment' "

Dominique N. Khactu, "Women's Studies: Its Problems and Impact on the Campus and Professional Associations"

Gretchen Chesley Lang, "Women in Society and Culture: An Anthropological Perspective"

W. Fred Lawrence, "Some Milestones on the Road to Equal Employment Opportunity for Women"

Susan Diemert Moch, "Self-Enhancing Strategies for Nursing Education"

A. K. Owen, "Instructional Development for Women in the Sciences"

Scot A. Stradley, "The Occupational and Wage Status of Women: Result of Reason, Habit, or Class?"

Lowell Thompson, "Sex Role Stereotyping in Elementary Social Studies Methods Books"

David J. Uherka, "Women and Mathematics"

Mary Wakefield-Fisher, "The Role of the Professional Nurse: Conflicting Perspectives"

Sandra L. Warner, "Toward Equity in Nursing: The Role of Educators"

Barrie Wells, "Women in Education: Some Perspectives and Prospects for Higher Education"

John D. Williams, "Women and Statistics"

Jole A. Williams, "What Can Be Done to Aid a Woman in Her Career Decision-Making Process"

We're not pretending anymore: Women's Studies in the curriculum

by Sheryl O'Donnell

What happens when college teachers and researchers treat women as subjects for serious study? What if women's lives--the daily work we do, the feelings we have, our relationships--were viewed as sources of history or political action or cultural artifact, the way men's lives always have been?

Traditionally, the academic study of human activity has been the study of male activity. "Women's issues" have been set apart as caregiving and homemaking, split off into vocational schools of nursing, home economics, and secretarial training. One might take a college degree and know all about the causes of World War II or how to sketch a nude or how to build a skyscraper and never wonder whether women have a history. Or if women make art. Or if women design buildings (would they make revolving doors you could push a stroller through? lobbies where you could change a diaper?)

COLLEGE STUDIES HAVE BEEN MEN'S STUDIES

The division of human knowledge into separate, isolated subjects using very different methods of discovery and analysis--as history, engineering, art--is not just a bureaucratic convenience for college officials. It is a system suited for the way we have tried to organize our lives into discrete and unrelated units: work vs. home; ideas vs. feelings; body vs. soul; theory vs. practice; masculine vs. feminine. No wonder those jokes about pipe-smoking absent-minded professors who lose raincoats or bump into walls somehow seem true. Academic specialties create narrow views and limited ideas which can grow dangerously remote from everyday life, especially from the lives of women and children.

The separation of daily experience from intellectual life began in the 5th century B.C., and is based upon what philosopher Hannah Arendt calls the Greek hatred for all labor of the body necessitated by biological needs. The Greeks kept slaves to spare themselves the daily work of cooking and cleaning. Why? Because, says Arendt, "the daily fight in which the human body is engaged to keep the world clean and prevent its decay bears little resemblance to heroic deeds; the endurance it needs to repair ever-anew the waste of yesterday is not courage, and what makes the effort painful is not danger but its relentless repetition." The Greeks were contemptuous of what we call "women's work." Their philosophers did not acknowledge its value even while slave and female labor created the essential conditions for the work of men. The scrubbing brush, the scouring cloth, the invisible weaving of a frayed and threadbare family life--these acts of world-preservation and world-repair leave no traces, make no monuments worth study. Ideas--those monuments the culture does value--exist in the marketplace, away from the lives of women and children and slaves, away from home.

This ancient notion of learning as a male domain still governs virtually every part of academic life on our campuses. "If there is any misleading concept," writes poet Adrienne Rich, "it is that of 'coeducation': that because women and men are sitting in the same classrooms, hearing the same lectures, reading the same books, performing the same laboratory experiments, they are receiving an equal education. They are not, first because the content of education itself validates men even as it invalidates women. Its very message is that men have been the shapers and thinkers of the world, and that this is only natural." Men, says the standard curriculum, create culture. Women bear and care for children and are therefore more properly akin to nature, culture's opposite.

In the nineteenth century, woman gained the right to study what men did, the right to study the "men's curriculum." In our time, women have begun to challenge the accuracy and value of that men's curriculum, not only for themselves but for men as well. For the last twelve years feminist scholars have examined the omissions and distortions of women presented by traditional university curricula. They have set about to transform its contents by integrating the study of women's lives, experiences, and contributions into all descriptions and analyses of human behavior. Courses of study, attitudes toward students and teachers, classroom techniques, choice of textbooks and research projects: all aspects of education have been scrutinized for their effects upon women. At some schools, separate Women's Studies departments have been formed, offering degrees and internships for students and researchers. At other schools, Women's Studies faculty are "mainstreaming" the new scholarship on women into existing departments. At still other schools, both approaches, separatist and mainstream, exist, depending on funds available, student support, institutional commitment, and faculty interest.

No matter what strategy is used, the argument for Women's Studies is the same: the college curriculum must incorporate rather than neglect the experiences and perspectives of women. Despite high enrollments in Women's Studies courses, the stark fact is that, under present circum-

stances, only a tiny fraction of the total student body is ever exposed to scholarly information on women. Yet a curriculum which reflects the new scholarship on women is even more critical now, when university graduates find themselves in a world where increasing numbers of women are in the paid labor market and role expectations for both sexes are shifting.

Responding to the challenge of modifying the curriculum to include the new research on women, a number of colleges and universities have undertaken projects to integrate Women's Studies into traditional course offerings. In the Plains region in the last two years, programs have begun at Montana State, the Great Lakes Association of Colleges, and the University of North Dakota, among others. The UND program was funded by the University's Office of Instructional Development, a Bush Foundation program designed to help UND faculty improve teaching skills, classroom effectiveness, and curriculum development.

A HANDBOOK: FORTHCOMING

Since faculty members attending the workshops represented many different departments on campus, the Handbook features a myriad of questions from the new scholarship on women. Why is "women's work" judged less valuable than men's? Are there sex differences in learning? Is sexism as harmful as racism in the classroom? How does low self-esteem affect women's career choices? Are there any answers to the marriage vs. career dilemma most women face?

There are some "how to" articles in the Handbook. Sandra Donaldson of UND's English department has designed a brochure showing how undergraduates on campuses with no formal Women's Studies program might incorporate women's studies research or courses into their academic programs. A. K. Owen, a biologist, has planned improvements for college women's education in the sciences. Two essays on curriculum design, one by anthropologist Gretchen Lang and one by Leola Furman of the Department of Social Work, show how integrating women's experiences into traditional courses can transform ways of studying power relationships in the family and of preparing social workers for professional practice. Old myths about man-the-hunter and the "ideal" nuclear family are substantially modified once we study cultural anthropology or wife abuse from a female perspective.

In one manner or another, all of the essays examine the ways that women are stigmatized by society's wish that they remain docile and pliant, obedient rather than curious. These qualities, hardly conducive to clear thinking or imaginative action, are sometimes mistaken for appropriately female behavior in school and at work.

Lowell Thompson quotes from a widely-used high school text, *Today's Problems:* "Women in general have aptitudes and qualities that make them more suited to certain types of work than men, such as secretarial work, nursing, and teaching young children." But teachers who hold this view of women's capacities, consciously or unconsciously, narrow females' life choices long before they come to college. Jole Williams writes that "sex differences in career interests and aspirations are found among the academically gifted as early as grade seven. . . .Elementary school boys select two to three times as many occupations as girls. The majority of girls choose to be teachers or nurses. Among high school students, girls continue to be more restrictive; as a frequent choice, secretary is added to the list of earlier acceptable occupations.

Several scientists attending the workshops write about social and cultural attitudes preventing women from studying and practicing science. A. K. Owen writes: "Math teaching is aimed more at males than females, especially in word problems, the *bete noire* of so many female students. They always concern the speed of trains or cars or measuring the sizes of fields or heights of buildings. How about measuring for carpeting or drapes, or computing the cost thereof, or adapting a recipe for six to feed twenty people? Diluting a baby's formula? If detergent costs $6.66 a gallon and $3.42 for 28 ounces, which is the better buy?"

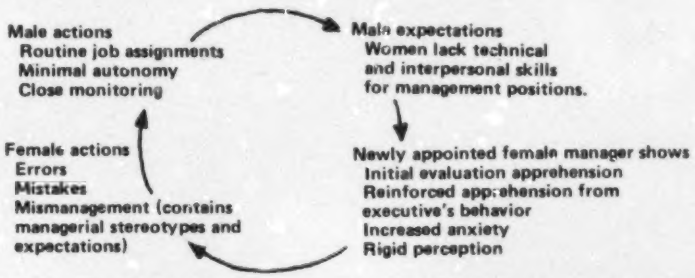
If society offers few occupations to women, limiting their paid work to "nurturing" jobs women do *gratis* inside the home, it also controls their actions in the workplace. Modern nurses, for instance, are just beginning to reclaim the power they had as medieval healers and "wise women" (often called "witches" by physicians who appropriated their practice of midwifery). Mary Wakefield-Fisher argues that the servile attention which some nurses pay to physicians is reinforced by inaccurate portrayals of nurses in TV shows such as "M.A.S.H." and "Nurse." Unfortunately, says Wakefield-Fisher, this public image is shared by doctors who have controlled the nursing profession since the early 1900s: "It [nursing] was largely a female occupation. The women had been programmed from childhood to esteem themselves lowly, to assert themselves rarely, to fear power, to shun leadership, to slight their careers. Their minds had been thoroughly conditioned for domination." Before the 1900s, nursing care was homebound and physician care took place in an office, so that doctors and nurses had little relationship to one another. After the 1900s, nurses moved into public settings. Offices and hospitals run by doctors who expected nurses to defer to them by playing what Sandra L. Warner calls the doctor/nurse game were the rule: "The rules of the doctor/nurse game include a restrictive communication pattern in which nurses make recommendations without appearing to do so and the physician acts upon the recommendation, also without appearing to ask for it."

Without exception, all of the faculty essays show how traditional sex role stereotypes harm women as students and teachers, as workers and managers. The essays support historian Gerda Lerner's contention that "women's role in the history of civilization has been different from that of men. Women have provided continuity in the building of communities. They have built and maintained institutions, and have attended to welfare and human needs. . . .Yet, they have been discriminated against." John Williams's statistical study of men and women UND faculty shows not only that women's salaries are not equal to men's, but also that "women are being overworked, not under-represented, on UND university committees." Serving as the "token woman" on such committees may satisfy affirmative action requirements, but it siphons off and diffuses female energies.

W. Fred Lawrence found that so-called "protective" labor laws passed during the late 19th and early 20th centuries legalized sex discrimination in employment of American women. By restricting the hours that women could work and by regulating wages for women, the Supreme Court provided a legal rationale for their low salaries in the interest of "health, public welfare, and public morals." David Nelson, reviewing sex bias in a second-year German textbook, found men characterized by the qualities "active, independent, strong, intelligent, and logical. Women are passive, dependent, emotional, and illogical; their physical appearance is stressed."

An interesting conceptual model of how sex role stereotypes

cripple women, taken from Rosen and Jerdee's *Becoming Aware* (1976), was presented by Dennis J. Elbert, who notes that business managers often feel women are more conservative, less confident, and more unwilling to take risks than their male counterparts. But how can women act otherwise, when research shows that women have been trained from



childhood to be hesitant, to wait until they're asked, as they did for high school dance invitations? This "waiting-to-be-asked behavior," writes Elbert, "if carried over into a career, is perceived by males as noninterest in career opportunities." This chart traces the circle of failure for women managers, as wrongly scrutinized by male executives.
"Unfortunately," notes Elbert, "the self-fulfilling prophecy of male managerial expectations is too common in business organizations today." The same self-fulfilling prophecies keep women out of science careers.

Although women comprise about 40% of the paid labor force, they hold only a third of the professional and managerial positions and are markedly absent from the ranks of scientists and engineers. In 1976 women held about 13% of the positions in mathematics, computer science, and the life sciences; only 7.5% of the positions in the physical sciences; and less than 1% of those in engineering. A. K. Owen writes, "Numbers, statistical breakdowns, years, disciplines vary, depending on what experts are consulted, but they amount to the same thing: women are under-represented at upper levels of nearly all scientific disciplines."

Why is this so? Again, a circular pattern of attitudes and behaviors acts as both cause and effect. Many girls do not take optional math courses because they are not encouraged to do so by parents and counselors, but also because they have less self-confidence, perceive mathematics as difficult, and have less clear career goals. The fact that they do not study math and science limits their career goals and contributes to the stereotype of mathematics as a male domain. This in turn leads women to receive less support and encouragement to pursue careers in the sciences.

What can be done to stop the harmful effects of sexism on women's education and career aspirations? Plenty, according to various UND faculty members. Jole Williams suggests that career counseling techniques be changed so that women are not expected to know what career they want before they seek help deciding: "At one time it was thought, for career counseling to be most effective, the individual client had to have previously decided, prior to the counseling session, what she most wanted to do. The limitations of that sort of approach are legion. It excludes from counseling countless women, the very ones who most need the help. Prior decisions, without the examination of the existing panoply of career information and personal information leaves women where they've been for centuries--floundering, unsure of what they personally can do, where they can get, and how they can go about implementing their personal plans."

One career more readily available to women in North Dakota than to women in more populated regions is that of high school music teacher. According to Barrie Wells, men have traditionally taught high school and college music while women have specialized in elementary music education. The virtual absence of women band directors in college and their relative scarcity in larger high schools may cause women students to avoid high school music teaching, except for teaching choral music. Or, college women may avoid conducting, composition, and harmony courses required for band directors. However, more women teach high school music in North Dakota and in the Plains region than elsewhere in the U.S. Smaller school districts, plenty of role models (including women band instructors), and strong employment patterns make the numbers of women teaching in the elementary and secondary schools of the northern plains proportionately higher than those found in more populous areas. Wells writes, "By contrast, my counterpart from a larger mid-western university told me, 'I must inform my women secondary music education majors, particularly instrumental majors, that they will have a tougher time finding jobs simply because they are women.'"

EDUCATION IS A POLITICAL EXPERIENCE

All of the Workshop essays demonstrate, on one level or another, how the politics of education affects women on all campuses in the region. Schools reflect social values, and society has insisted that women do not create culture. What we know and what we are taught about women thus becomes the same: they *are and must be* the necessary (but culturally trivial) preservers and maintainers of the male domain. They *are and must be* on the margins of the world. To understand the vicious implications of this view of women is to understand that, despite claims to the contrary, college classes and textbooks are neither gender-free nor value-free.

Often, of course, those who attempt to change the curriculum are viewed as "political" or "unscholarly," while those who attempt to maintain the status quo are viewed, wrongly I think, as "nonpolitical" and "scholarly." Feminists understand that education is a political experience and not a neutral, dispassionate event. They understand that the shapers of knowledge are the shapers of power. Perhaps the most lasting contribution of Women's Studies to intellectual history will be one mentioned by economist Dominique Khactu in his Handbook essay: "In addition to enlarging the consciousness of women and the significance of gender to scholarly concerns, Women's Studies in the future will serve also to correct academe's misleading allegiance to objectivity and its dangerous tendency to confuse the frank admission of perspective with bias."

Women's Studies teachers frankly advocate that the female perspective is a serious subject for academic inquiry. When will we be able to do so without pretending we are doing something else?

Women's math problems can be solved

by David J. Uherka

David J. Uherka has figured out some ways to confront the problem of math education for women. He divides his Handbook essay into three sections, titled "How It Was," "How It Is," and "How It Should Be," selections from which appear below.

HOW IT WAS

When one reads about what women had to go through in past centuries in order to study mathematics, a science, or any other subject that at the time was considered "unlady-like," it is not surprising that there are now so few women in these fields. Although there evidently still are social pressures causing women to avoid mathematics as a profession, according to the history books in the past the pressure was extreme. Women who had somehow come to be knowledgeable in mathematics or science were publicly ridiculed (by Moliere, for example in the 17th century). They were sometimes called witches because they delved into "mystical" subjects like mathematics or science; they were criticized for neglecting their "feminine" duties like sewing and entertaining; and, until recently, were completely barred from scientific employment and from even entering laboratory rooms.

HOW IT IS

The question arises, does our present educational system contribute to these problems or will they gradually disappear with our present set-up? There is more than one problem involved. Women are anxious about math. Women avoid math. Women do not major in math. Women do not teach much upper-level math in universities. Women rarely go on for Ph.Ds in math. I will list a few examples to help illustrate what the present situation is. Some of them indicate that the situation is improving; others that there is still much work to be done.

* Recently, a woman student at UND decided to change her major to mathematics. She reported receiving a good deal of criticism from her mother, who holds a responsible position in this state. The student went on to get a degree in math, with a good but not outstanding record, and had no trouble getting a job with beginning pay over $20,000. However, a year or two later she thought advancement in her job would be difficult because of her sex.

* In the math track meets at UND the winners often are women, but in college other fields seem to be more attractive to them than mathematics. Of the eleven UND undergraduate mathematics prizes given out several years ago for solving announced problems, one woman won four of the prizes. She was a mathematics major but left the field to go into medicine.

* My daughter, two years ago, at age 10, said math was one of her favorite subjects. Now she says she hates math because "it's boring." I also happen to have a ten-year-old son who now says math is his favorite subject. What will he say in two years?

* About one-third of our mathematics majors at UND are women. This is much higher than I would have guessed. It is encouraging, but the figure should be closer to one-half. Also, approximately one-third of our recent graduate students have been women. Very few of these women seem to go on for Ph.D.'s in mathematics, however. The percentage of tenure-track mathematics faculty members at UND who are women is 0%. However, the department follows the university practice of using as many temporary and part-time women faculty members as possible, at low pay.

* The novel *The Women's Room* (French, 1977), a book which is certainly read by many women, helps to project the notion that mathematics is not for women, by indicating that the statistics courses, taken by women as a requirement for a Ph.D. in English are, I believe the word used is, "hideous." Of course, the way they are taught, maybe they really are hideous.

HOW IT SHOULD BE

"Let no one unversed in geometry enter here." --Plato

We should strive for the following:

1. Eliminate the avoidance of math.
2. Convince girls at an early age that mathematics-related fields are equally appropriate to both sexes.
3. Increase the number of women teaching and working in mathematics-related fields.
4. Make mathematics more interesting at lower levels with better teaching. Decrease emphasis on the "new math" which is neither new nor difficult, but is a bag of "buzz" words that some math educators promoted a few years ago as being innovative, which in turn got educators promoted but confused parents and made them anti-math.
5. Eliminate math anxiety and its vicious circle with math avoidance.
6. Educate people who influence students and their choices of careers not to label various possible careers as "man-work" or "woman-work."

High school students should be strongly urged to take more than the two-year math requirement if they are at all thinking of attending college. In order to keep from eliminating options from their futures, they should be ready to take calculus as freshmen in college. This means they should take geometry, algebra, and trigonometry in high school. We should stop trying to scare them with statements to the effect that calculus is difficult. On the contrary, it is the course where the real beauty of mathematics is first encountered. Many people do not get the inspiration to enter a math-related field until they have had calculus, which immediately eliminates most girls, for they are blocked off from math long before they get to calculus. In my own case, before I took calculus (as a college sophomore because of low high school requirements), I thought that mathematics as a field was boring and lifeless and I could not understand why anyone would want to major in it. However, after seeing in calculus the fantastic ways the human mind could conjure up knowledge after starting with little or nothing, there was no question about my choice.

Teachers at all levels ought to make math courses more interesting and less fearsome by adding to text material and by eliminating some of the boring repetition. (You don't

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Letter from Charlottesville, VA

by Jean Lee

Last May was quite a month. On the sixth, after completing the required course work and a semester of concentrated reading and study, I passed my comprehensive oral examinations for the Ph.D. degree. The next day I addressed wedding invitations. Out-of-town company arrived on short notice. Then I sewed my wedding dress--nothing simple--hand stitched lace motifs overlaid on candlelight satin. There also were my sons' usual end-of-school activities: track and field day, family night, conferences with school personnel about next semester's schedule, and a long promised outing in the Blue Ridge Mountains. I look back on May with the conviction that if I could handle that, I'll be able to handle almost anything. Furthermore, I have a wonderful sense of accomplishment about the last two years.

During the summer of 1979, after a divorce, I moved to Charlottesville, Virginia, with my children. They entered public school, and I enrolled as a doctoral student in history at the University of Virginia. I should have been confident, and sometimes I was. Among other things, I already had a master's degree and some college level teaching experience, had been an editor for the American Historical Association in Washington, D.C., and, for Plainswoman, had published several scholarly articles in my research specialty, and returned to graduate school with a Danforth Graduate Fellowship. In my most optimistic moments I intended to savor the graduate experience. I had waited a long time for it.

Anxiety, not confidence, however, permeated that first autumn in Virginia. My apprehensions were partly academic. Would I succeed after having been away from school for fourteen years? How would I ever compete against students who had recently finished their undergraduate education and therefore presumably were steeped in the latest scholarship in American history? Would I encounter the discrimination against female students that I had experienced when working on my master's degree during the 1960s? At a time when positions are not plentiful in college and university teaching (where most Ph.D.s in history spend their academic careers) was I foolish to return to graduate school at all?

In addition to these questions there were others that concerned my being the mother of two young children who entered the first and fifth grades that fall. At divorce proceedings my husband had alleged that my returning to school would result in neglect of the boys. Even friends and family members who offered encouraging words often added a postscript implying that I was a courageous woman and that *they* certainly were incapable of coping with so many changes in such a short time. Was I deluding myself in thinking that I could?

During that first fall many, not all, of the academic anxieties were resolved. Sometimes I worked nearly all night when a paper was due the following afternoon. But I managed. In October, when the house was without electricity for three days because of a freak ice storm that knocked down power lines, I studied by candlelight for my first written examination in fourteen years. Often I was intellectually exhilarated as I read challenging, fascinating books, wrote papers that demanded all the analytic skills I could muster, and talked with faculty members and fellow students.

I also found that significant changes had occurred, with regard to women and the historical profession, since I had completed my master's degree in the mid-1960s. As an undergraduate at a small liberal arts college, I had one female history professor. There were none in the department where I earned my master's degree, and more than one of the male professors there let it be known that they regarded women as innately unsuited to be historians. One woman I knew was advised to write a dissertation on jelly jars in colonial America, but she refused and chose instead a topic in English constitutional history.

Nor was the situation any more hopeful concerning the curriculum. Undergraduate and graduate students alike read of such major historical developments as abolitionism before the Civil War and urban Progressive reform in the early twentieth century without any hint that women were deeply involved. Anne Bradstreet, perhaps the finest poet in seventeenth-century America, was ignored. Labor history failed to consider women's role in the work force or their early organizational efforts. Little or no historical background accompanied discussion of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which granted women the right to vote. One-half of the population was sorely neglected in the history books and history classrooms.

But if my experience as a doctoral student since 1979 is at all typical, there have been some encouraging developments. Perhaps one-half of the history graduate students at the University of Virginia are women. Three faculty members in my department are female, far less than 50% of the staff, but certainly an improvement. Furthermore, several male professors have offered strong encouragement and helpful advice concerning my academic career.

Teaching materials and course offerings also show evidence of change. Traditional political history, which seldom took note of women, no longer enjoys its former preeminence. There now are scholars of women's history, whose research is being integrated into the curriculum. Furthermore, there has been a dramatic rise in the amount of work undertaken in demographic and social history. Of course it is possible to write such history without paying attention to women, or to misinterpret statistical data. For example, to state, as one study does, that women in colonial New England must not have been particularly frightened by childbirth because "only" one in five died as a result, is to deny common sense. The best of the new history considers women on their own terms and also vastly expands our understanding of the American experience.

Without minimizing the substantial gains that have been made, both in the curriculum and in the treatment of women as students and as faculty members, there still is room for improvement. Sometimes professors are benignly insensitive, as when I was asked to be a grader in a history course and was told that I probably could use some "pin money"--the old canard that women work for frivolities, not necessities. More serious, even today women students

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Meanwhile, back at the ranch

by Jessie Goddard

High above, two large V-flights of Canada geese are winging their way northwest, their strong wings beating rhythmically.

"Lawrence, get up there and relieve Arthur at point awhile," one whispery-musical voice seems to say. Sure enough, one large bird moves up in the formation as the leader drifts back, away from what must be the most tiring position, due to the unprotected buffeting from strong winds. We watch the shifting as lead birds are replaced by those from the mid-rank positions. Occasionally a bird or two will drop far back, and send out encouraging remarks to the stragglers.

The flights are soon lost to sight. We hear more bird music, from nearby grass clumps, bushes and fenceposts. Meadowlarks, chickadees, killdeer, and the more distant ducks on the stock ponds north of the house, all have something to say. Chickadee-dee-dee conversation is frequently answered, if one joins in and tries to imitate the bird-sound as exactly as possible. Over in the pasture we hear some sassy crows.

--from "Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch"

"Let me talk to the managing editor." The voice on the telephone was masculine, and angry. When the caller heard a friendly feminine voice identifying itself as the managing editor, he couldn't believe it. She, managing editor, managed to soothe the caller sufficiently to invite him to drop by the newspaper office and have coffee with her, next time he was in town.

The incident illustrates two things about women in the media, or in any responsible professional job, for that matter. First, the surprise of the caller (who could as well have been a woman) at finding a woman in a managerial spot; and second, the logistical advantage of the "feminine touch" in a sticky situation. There's nothing like a real lady, fellas, to help you control your temper. Complaining men and women alike realize they have met their match in a woman who is a pro at whatever she is doing, and is not bullied. Despite the long way she may have come, the executive woman is still so small a minority that when she is found by people like the angry caller, she is a surprise. That tells the story.

The future, however, forecasts more and more women in these top spots. Contrast a masthead of general magazines of even ten years ago with some of the leading publications today. Look at the credit lines of TV shows. Scan the employee lists of public relations and advertising firms. Note your own daily and weekly papers and specialized house papers. Many list more women's names nowadays, women who have top jobs, including women who own and manage their own publishing businesses.

Sadly, however, it is still true that a woman executive must do twice the job in order to receive half the recognition that a man would. Just doing the best job possible, with the best background and field experience does not seem to be enough to get women fully accepted in the media or elsewhere. We always seem to be on trial in a manner not demanded of most men. We've seen mediocre male reporters and feature writers given the best assignments, but who re-writes their stuff? You guessed it, a woman staffer who has given more thought than he has to taut, literate writing.

Media people are free-wheeling types, though, used to crises and to dealing with all sorts of people, and sticking to getting the story, pictures all in by deadline. The conviction that presses will start rolling, with something, on time, no matter what, is sex-less and cements together disparate men and women and gives to women, perhaps better than other professions, the opportunity to become solid elements of the staff whose contributions are recognized and appreciated.

Some of my own happiest experiences in writing came about because my first name is unisex. So, when I applied, longer ago than I care to recall, for an overseas journalism job, I was accepted quickly. But when I showed up at the newspaper office in the Far East, you could hear jaws drop. Yet my press credentials were in order, I covered my assignment and freelance stories well enough for publication, and I got by, female or not.

How do I see myself as relating to my audience? Audience reaction makes or breaks anyone in communications work. It gratifies me (and makes me look good with the boss) to receive letters for "a good story, and accurate, for a change," or saying that I "never misrepresent anything." A letter signed by both members of a retired couple said, "We always read your column, and it takes us back to our own farm childhood."

For the last three years I have been writing "Meanwhile Back at the Ranch," a weekly column in the Williston (North Dakota) Daily Herald that appears on page 2 of the Sunday edition, unfailingly. That "unfailingly" is a must. I can allow neither snow nor dark of night nor other tasks, travel, emergencies, or whatever to interfere with promised deadlines. Column writing has to be taut; frequently specialized, but not always; and of course any public writing should make accurate and graceful use of language. I try to remember other good advice: never talk down to a non-professional audience. Get the story. Flesh it out. Wrap it up. Meet the deadline. Expect to do it extra-well, if you're a woman, and good luck.

W. E. Damon
Fargo, ND.

East of Hazen, ND.

Portrait of a powerful female leader in Brittany, France

by Martha Kay Parker

From December to May 1972, while a graduate student in cultural anthropology at the University of Massachusetts, I did fieldwork in Brittany, France, in a small village near Quimper, where I wanted to observe how the work that women did placed them in village society. The strongest advice I received, from the French sociologist Donatien Laurent, was that I should be "simple," or just plain folks, if I wanted to work my way into the confidence of Breton villagers, because Bretons are very sensitive to anything they think might be snobbish, especially coming from highly educated outsiders.

My requirements were fairly specific. I wanted to live alone rather than in the bosom of a family in order to cook for myself and avoid the Breton diet heavy on potatoes, starches, and fats. I also wanted to live alone for the sake of privacy.

My landlady was Mrs. B., a large rough woman with black darting intelligent eyes who owned many tourist homes, unoccupied for the winter months, and who was widely known as one who had far flung business and political contacts. She was happy to rent me a very nice apartment: two bedrooms, bath and kitchen with gas stove and refrigerator, fully furnished and overlooking a lovely garden, for $40 a month. Mrs. B. was brash, noisy, and nosey, aggressive and pushy; someone generally difficult for me to like, but useful in many ways.

To do fieldwork in anthropology (the study of all aspects of human culture) you need to have a problem or question you want to solve. I was interested in the changing role of women in a changing economic situation. What would happen to marriages and family relationships when Breton women began working outside the home and earning their own money? The traditional pattern for women in the area of Brittany I was working in had been that they maintained the house and cared for the children (often as many as eight or twelve), cared for all the animals (cattle, pigs, chickens and horses) and also assisted their husbands or male relatives in the heavy fieldwork growing potatoes and fodder. During my stay in the village, three patterns co-existed: some women were still engaged in the traditional one, some women (teachers, shopkeepers, factory workers) held jobs outside the home and earned a wage, and some women, the most envied and fortunate in the Breton view, did not work outside the house at all but were able to stay at home with children.

SETTING OF THE PARISH OF LANDAVID

My study area is in the southwest quarter of Brittany. Brittany, a broad hilly peninsula jutting into the North Atlantic, makes up the western most region of France. Brittany is a Celtic area where people have traditionally spoken Breton and most now speak French as well. It is almost entirely Catholic, with a distinct Breton culture. The Breton people make a living by means of agriculture, fishing, canning and mining. The pseudonym for my parish is Landavid, which together with Poulon, forms the commune of Poulon. The parish, *paroisse*, is presided over by a priest; the *commune* is a district under the administration of a mayor assisted by a local council.

The village I settled in, Landavid, has a shoreline on the Atlantic Ocean and runs inland approximately five miles in a long rectangular strip three miles wide. The community of 500 people is distributed around a 13th century church at the center of the parish. The parish is made up of two essential parts: the *bourg* or village proper, with the church, the cemetery, a large concentration of homes and farm houses, and most of the shops including two groceries, a butcher, bakery and cafe; and the area outside the *bourg* where the *hameaux* or hamlets are located, each hamlet being composed of one to four or five farmhouses with surrounding fields.

Elderly people in the village still tend to speak only Breton, while middle aged Bretons are bilingual for Breton and French, often lapsing into Breton because they are more comfortable in it and because they can carry on confidential conversations in the presence of Frenchmen. Young Bretons are monolingual for French. In the old days young Breton students spoke only Breton when they entered school. They were instructed in French and punished for speaking Breton by being forced to hang a wooden *sabot* (shoe) around their necks. Now Breton is taught in all levels of the schools.

Farming, canning, small shops, and tourism are the ways to earn a living in Landavid. Farming in Landavid consists of dairy, pig raising, the production of various fodders for animals, and the growing of grains, potatoes and vegetables for human consumption. The *commercants*, or merchants, all women, run a butcher shop, two small grocery stores, one with attached cafe, and a bakery shop. There is also work for both men and women at the pork cannery in the adjoining parish one and a half miles away and in the small cement factory.

The only other industry is tourism, begun in 1961. Several people in the parish have taken low interest bank loans and built new *gites* or tourist homes, or they have refurbished old barns, chicken houses, or farm houses suitable for tourists. It was one of these *gites* that I rented.

While there is a variety of work in the parish, there is not enough work for everyone, and so Landavid suffers from a mass exodus of almost all its young people who must seek work elsewhere on the railroad, in the Merchant Marine, the military, the police, in the professions, and as servants in large cities. This means that the population remaining tends to be an old one.

Villagers I talked to invariably were proud that I had selected their village to study, and I was asked to repeat over and over again what I was doing, how I had reached Landavid, how I would help preserve records of their way of life. The villagers also thought, because of American movies and TV shows, that all Americans used drugs and that Chicago was full of gangsters. They expected me to hate Russians and communism and would, for my benefit, assure me of their hatred of communism too, not an unlikely attitude in a staunchly Catholic area.

MRS. B., MEDIATOR BETWEEN TWO CULTURES

During my five months in Landavid, in numerous conversations and observations, it became clear to me that Mrs. B., my landlady, age about 50, functioned as a link or mediator between many of the illiterate, relatively unsophisticated Breton speaking peasants in the village, and the complex bureaucracy of the French government in Quimper. For instance, one of the activities she was involved in was securing pensions, medical insurance payments, and Social Security payments for elderly and physically incapacitated people who needed them to survive. She told

me she had started this work in 1948, when a man was killed at sea leaving ten children and a widow on a tiny pension. They would have starved. "It didn't matter to me that he was a Communist," she said. "I still wanted to help them. I wrote a letter to the government to complain about the case. The local officials had simply folded their hands and said it was the law and it couldn't be changed. My letter resulted in a new law which gives larger pensions to widows. For this achievement I was honored at banquets in both Quimper and Paris. Since that time I have been actively involved in the welfare of all the people in this region."

Mrs. B. is unusual in the village in that she inherited her father's farm. In this area of Brittany the farm is kept in the male line under the same family name whenever possible, and only under rare circumstances is it the female who inherits. Mrs. B. inherited her parents' farm because she was an only child. Normally one child stays behind on the farm to care for the parents and to take over the affairs of

the farm. This inheritance put her in good economic position and a good position to marry well. (Men who inherit farms in the village usually remain celibate because modern women do not want to do the hard work of the farm.)

Mrs. B.'s marriage seems to have been made for love rather than money or land or social position, a fact which must have been rare in the village in those days as it was repeatedly mentioned to me by her neighbors. She and her husband were married when they were both very young. Her husband, a sailor, was not wealthy, and he brought no land into the marriage. Mrs. B. told me that during the Second World War he was in the *maquis*, or French underground, and after seven years in the French Navy, had wanted to sign on for two years in Viet Nam, but she had refused to allow him to do so. Mrs. B. was 20 years old when she married, and had four children almost immediately. Her own mother cared for the children while she continued her political meetings and social welfare activities. Mrs. B.'s children told me that they now resent the fact that their mother rarely was at home with them.

When Mrs. B. was 45 years old, she unintentionally conceived a fifth child. Neighbors told me she had not wanted the baby, although abortion was unthinkable in a conservative Catholic area and impossible to obtain. In spite of the unexpected shock, she is now happy to have the child, and continues to be active, because when her young daughter is not in nursery school, she is taken care of by neighbors, a daughter-in-law, or Mrs. B.'s father.

Mrs. B. is fortunate that she and her husband have a firm economic base for all her various activities. In the 1950s they started a small cement factory in the village at an opportune moment. For labor, they used two of their bachelor sons and paid them low wages until they were married and needed more. The cement factory prospered because cement was needed for all the corner field markers, relating to *remembrement* in the 1960s, a government plan to combine hundreds of tiny fields in the village into one large contiguous field for each farmer. The cement factory also contributed to the interiors of chimneys, new septic tanks, and the tourist construction boom of the last 10 to 15 years. During the period when her husband was ill, Mrs. B. ran his plant and became adept at running the business.

Mrs. B. has always been an innovator in the village. In an area where there is fierce competition to keep up with the Joneses, she strode ahead of everyone. She bought a meat freezer. Mrs. O., a neighbor, told me, "We now raise rabbits, chickens, calves and pigs and kill and freeze them for later. In 1961 Mrs. B. got the whole village together to ask them to buy a huge communal meat freezer in which every family would freeze all their food. She had a meat freezer at home and one weekend while she was away, some people broke into her house to examine it and see what it was really like. We all voted to buy our own home freezers because it is more convenient and because we didn't want to waste time going to get meat in the *bourg* at the communal freezer. Mrs. B. led the way with this freezer idea because she had traveled a lot to Germany and England and had seen very advanced things the brought them back to the village."

Both Mrs. B. and her husband own cars in a village where few owned a car in 1960, so she is completely independent to come and go as she pleases. The B.'s also have a telephone in their home when it is still exhorbitantly expensive to own one, and only three to four villagers have a phone. These are valuable tools that she uses to keep up her network of contacts and to have people indebted to her for various favors, as we shall see.

Mrs. B. has pioneered tourism in her village. As she once told me, "I had empty chicken houses and didn't know what to do with them. I was the first one to build *gites* [tourist homes] here. I had to fight a lot of misunderstanding from both the villagers and the banks. I wanted to lead the way, without thought of the possible money I could gain. [This was patently untrue--I know she carefully evaluates every plan for possible gain and loss, both economic and political.] I had full *gites* right away. I paid local artisans to make authentic Breton furniture and local stonemasons to do stonework. I brought them a lot of local work, where before they had to go outside the region to work. Tourists in the village buy a lot of groceries, milk and potatoes and help the merchants and order a lot of custom furniture and granite statues and have these things sent to them at home. In 1967 we founded a tourist board but last year [1971] several of us broke away and founded a new board. The old group vulgarized things and didn't keep to the authentic Breton style. This second group was formed along lines of similar groups found in Ireland. I've taken two trips to Ireland to visit their *gites* and hotels and to talk with their travel agents. They are organized and sell their tourism in a way that we don't yet, but I've learned a lot from my trips. There are now 13 *gites* in Landavid rented out by 9 owners." continued on page 18

HIGH HEELS

Men didn't wear them long--high heels--
though they weren't even very high,
a couple of inches, with a thick base,
wide toes, laces, lots of support--
like the shoes old ladies wear
carrying shopping bags on the subway,
their thick ankles heaving against
opaque support hose rippling with veins,
a legacy, perhaps, of real high heels.

Real high heels, the heavy duty kind,
made for aficionados of fashion
who know, as Mother used to say,
"It hurts to be beautiful,"
real high heels, four inches, five inches high,
the base as big as a baby's thumbnail,
anchored by kid leather straps
across manicured toes, behind pumiced heels,
these real high heels are earned
like the Congressional medal, like the bull's ear,
like being called Mom.

And everywhere--out on the town, downtown, or in the mall·
men's eyes follow the army of high heels,
drawn by the chic click, the elongated calves
marching in a heady parade, propelled forward
by design--the attitude of flight without its possibility--
so sensuous, so vulnerable, courting the homage of those eyes
just as the doe courts the rifle into which she gazes.
Yes, to walk, to live with such danger, is an adventure
that fills the lungs, frees the soul, and ends in itself,
like a camera safari in the bush of East Africa.

Then, at night, you can take them off,
rub your feet, explore your changed
relationship to the bathroom mirror,
your feet huddled in pile-lined scuffs.
You can turn the pages of a fashion magazine,
see a beautiful object, jeweled and porcelain,
a tea cup too small, too lovely, for tea.
You can be startled to find it not a cup at all,
but a shoe, fashioned to contain one bound foot.
Did you know, reads the gossipy, breathless prose,
that noble women of ancient China
hid feet, blued and yellowed with gangrene, inside here,
inside these tiny, these beautiful shoes?
Of course they couldn't walk at all,
were not propelled forward,
had not come a long way yet,
but who wouldn't want to drink champagne
out of a shoe like that?

Joan Eades
Grand Forks, ND.

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Emma Mott, Lady Instructor, 1884-85

by Elizabeth Hampsten

Emma Mott, to my mind, is made of the stuff of heroism. She inspires, she casts awe about her, and a little fear. There are people still living in the town where she lived for over forty years, but, unaccountably, they have almost nothing to say about her--they were too little, their parents did not talk about her; she was, well, "different." She taught during the opening year of the University of North Dakota, an event which, given the university's approaching centennial, one might suppose would be noted, but so far it has not. Her grandson, Henry Mott, a surveyor like his father and grandfather, remembers her somewhat diffidently as strong, healthy, and domineering. She "had her ideas, and that's how things were." Active in WCTU, Emma Mott with her husband broke up all twenty-seven saloons in Grafton, after which she carried the keys at her belt. One senses the mettle of the woman in the letter she wrote to the parents of a student in her charge (see page 15).

Before establishing herself in Grafton, North Dakota, Emma Mott had had a varying career. She was born January 7, 1849, in Branchville, New Jersey. Her father, Henry Schoenmacher, of German parentage, was a lawyer. Her mother, Drucilla Price, came from a Scottish family. Emma began teaching school at age 15 in Pennsylvania (New Jersey having refused to consider her because she was too young to certify), and over the years she alternated earning money by teaching with taking college courses. She studied at the normal school in Trenton, the Collegiate Institute at Newton, NJ, at the Philadelphia Conservatory of Elocution and Oratory, and at Bryant and Stratton Business College. Music was a part of her professional life as well. She played the organ in Chicago, sang an oratorio in New York City at the time she was on her wedding trip, and she taught music in Grafton

Emma Mott was in her mid-thirties by the time she ventured to North Dakota. Henry Mott says that his grandmother traveled by steamer to Minto, homesteaded a half section, spent a year by herself in a sod shanty, started the first school in Minto, and married only shortly before beginning to teach at the University in Grand Forks in the fall of 1884. She returned to Ohio to marry Henry Mott, a lawyer who, in Grafton, turned to surveying. An interviewer for the state Historical Data project gives some interesting details about Emma Mott's second coming to North Dakota, in 1882, with her husband. The Motts traveled by steamboat to Duluth and from there to Grafton by rail, bringing with them "some furniture, chickens, and books." The Motts resided in Grafton. "Mrs. Mott filed on a farm south of Edinburg but did not comply with the requirements for proving up, another wanted it, fired a bullet through house and they had to leave it." The report cites her as teacher of the first school in Grafton in 1882 at a salary of $40. She "brought own" textbooks, taught 70 pupils in a building 50' by 30' with six windows and two doors, and was supplied with desks but not blackboard. This schoolhouse later served as city warehouse.

The University of North Dakota opened at Grand Forks in the autumn of 1884 in an unfinished four-story brick building, not a tree or shrub in sight. Broadway (now University Avenue) was a plowed strip to Grand Forks a mile away, but most people walked along the railroad track, and classes began in the early afternoon to give them time to get there. UND received drinking water in barrels from Grand Forks, and emptied its sewage into the coulee. The cistern leaked, there was no furnace, too few stoves, and a desperate need for a plank walk to the railroad flag stop. As for students, none of the 79 enrolled during 1884-85 actually took college courses. Ten were in the "sub-preparatory" class (see page 15). About 26 students completed the year. None came from more than fifty miles away and none had been born in North Dakota.

The first year was difficult, and many crises centered about the person of Emma Mott, who resigned from the teaching staff in mid-May and summarily left. The minutes for the Board of Regents record as early as the seventeenth of February "Resignation of Mrs. Mott presented. No action taken," but drastic action was taken at the Board's meeting of May 12 when it was "Moved that the Secretary be instructed to notify Mrs. Mott that her services will not be required the coming year, present term to close with the school year." Her replying letter of May 18 was copied into the Board minutes of June 15, 1885 (see insert). About the word "estray" she was correct if not complimentary. It is a term in law for a stray domestic animal.

How did matters come to such a pass? Emma Mott was not the only casualty that first year. The president and janitor lost their jobs as well, but the irritations she stirred up called attention to fundamental anomalies, among them the delusion of founding Yale upon the plains. And this ideal envisioned a male institution. Although women students were admitted from the beginning, in fact five of the first seven graduates were women, the board of regents were all men, and all faculty applicants were men. Among the three appointed to the faculty by the Board at its meeting of July 2, 1884, was the Reverend William Maxwell Blackburn, president. A graduate in 1850 of Hanover College and pastor in Cincinatti of the Central Presbyterian Church, Blackburn had been professor of Biblical and ecclesiastical history at the Presbyterian Theological Seminary of the Northwest, and in 1879 had published *The History of the Christian Church from Its Origin to the Present Time.* He had a wife and two daughters.

The second appointment went to Henry Montgomery (BA University College, Toronto; BSc Victoria College) to be Vice President and professor of natural science. Montgomery helped in the planning of the building and argued strongly but futilely against boarding students. He wanted to be president, but was turned down, although during the two following years, he became acting president.

Hired as professor of Greek and Latin Languages and Literature was Webster Merrifield, who was also to teach algebra and geometry. Merrifield had visited Grand Forks

in the summer of 1879, having taken the train as far as Fargo and walked the rest of the way. He was 34 years old, AB Yale 1878, had taught at a boys' school in New York state and tutored Greek and Latin at Yale for four years, resigning because of ill health. Blackburn's salary was $2500, Montgomery's $2000, and Merrifield's $1500. In addition, the Board budgeted $1000 for a "lady instructor" and $60 a month for a janitor. And, at its meeting of July 10, the Board accepted the recommendation of President-elect Blackburn for "the employment of Mrs. E. S. Mott of Grafton as an Instructor who should also have oversight of the young ladies of the University as an advisor." She was not considered to have faculty status and attended meetings by invitation voted on by the men.

As we have seen, there were no students ready for Caesar and Xenophon, Merrifield's specialties. By far the largest enrollment was in what was euphemistically named the "sub-junior preparatory class," under the direction of Mrs. Mott, and this was the program that gave the most trouble. As early as mid-September the faculty was meeting "in full" (a way of saying that Mrs. Mott was also present) in order to lighten her load and presumably give the men something to teach. The president took the "B" class in English

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SHE DELIBERATELY AND REGULARLY BEGAN EATING WHILE [PRESIDENT BLACKBURN] WAS ASKING THE BLESSING. HER HEATED RETORT THAT THE FOOD WAS EQUALLY POOR BEFORE OR AFTER THE BLESSING HARDLY ILLUMINATED THE ENQUIRY.

--Louis Geiger, in University of the Northern Plains

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grammar. But Mrs. Mott's sub-junior preparatory class was still so large that she was assigned a part-time assistant, Cora Smith, then a senior student at Grand Forks High School.

Clearly Mrs. Mott was swamped with work, and yet in the midst of trying to cope with an entire non-college student body, the faculty was "given notice" by President Blackburn "of his intention, at an early meeting, to move the adoption of courses of study in the following subjects: History, mental and moral philosophy, natural theology and evidences of Christianity, Logic, Civil Policy and Political Economy." That was on September 26. Four days later, with "Mr. Blackburn in the chair" and Mrs. Mott again in attendance, the faculty met to request that she make "a special and brief" report about her department, "omitting wants and recommendations." Montgomery and Merrifield were assigned as a committee to reorganize the sub-junior preparatory class. It would appear that by late September Emma Mott was doing most of the teaching and was having taken away from her what little authority might accrue in the classroom.

The next mention of Mrs. Mott in minute books was in February when the Board received but did not act upon, her initial resignation. On the 18th the Board met to "investigate certain reported clashing of authority of the Faculty and Mrs. Mott," and she was asked to be present. The minutes continue: "On motion the Board listened to President Blackburn who among other things charged Mrs. Mott with being a tale bearer and not using proper discretion in case of misdemeanors of the students and advised the Board that Mrs. Mott be dismissed from the corps of teachers but not establishing the facts after which Mrs. Mott who denied the charges was heard."

Some of the clashing of authority was aggravated by the housing arrangements, whereby the Blackburn family and Mrs. Mott had quarters on the first floor of the university building, Mrs. Mott having assigned to her, according to Board minutes of September 3, the large bedroom facing the hall, a study, and class rooms on the north west side. In his book on the history of UND, Louis Geiger writes that according to Blackburn, "she deliberately and regularly began eating while he was asking the blessing. Her heated retort that the food was equally poor before or after the blessing hardly illuminated the enquiry." Be that as it may, when the Board re-convened their February 18 meeting at three o'clock in the afternoon, they "moved and carried that the family of Dr. Blackburn occupy a separate dining-room and that his daughters be requested not to mingle with the students except in the parlor in the same manner as visitors."

Whatever easing of domestic tension may have resulted from separate dining arrangements, clashes continued for Emma Mott in the university; witness three resolutions of March 12: "That Mrs. Mott be invited to attend this meeting. That the following notice be posted on the bulletin board: 'The halls and stair cases of this building are not intended to be places for congregating unnecessarily nor for long conversations.' By order of the faculty. That in as much as Mrs. Mott has not responded to the invitation of the Faculty, the Secretary of the Faculty [Webster Merrifield] be instructed to communicate with her with a view to ascertaining whether she meets the class in Elocution oftener than twice a week." Five days later Merrifield was instructed to investigate more specifically the elocution class, and as a result of his report the following day, he was "instructed to inform Mrs. Mott 'that it is the wish of the Faculty that the class in Elocution shall meet for teaching or practice, or both, only twice a week, and one hour at each session.' Moved and carried." Louis Geiger refers to Mrs. Mott as being "remembered less for her erudition than her exaggerated eloquent rendition of 'Curfew Shall Not Ring Tonight.'" Every reference he makes to her is condescending. He calls her a "strong-minded little woman with a sharp tongue."

When President Blackburn presented to the Board Mrs. Mott's year-end class report, he explained that although she had included in that report the hours and numbers of pupils whom she supervised in study hall, he could not allow her to count them among her duties, even though, he admitted, the study hall had to be supervised by someone. Blackburn made a large wavy line crossing out that part of her neat hand-written chart. The men's harassments against her seem petty, constant, and slightly comic. Emma Mott was assigned to unrelieved remedial teaching, and when it turned out that remedial teaching was virtually all that was being done for the year, she was not allowed to make known her "wants and recommendations."

The status of female instructors did not improve with Mrs. Mott's departure. At the Board meeting of May 12 when the secretary was instructed to inform Mrs. Mott that her services would not be required the coming year, it was also "moved and lost to retain Blackburn as president at $2500." The two other men were allowed suitable raises: $500 for Merrifield and $250 for Montgomery. In regard to the position of lady instructor, the Board asked advice from the faculty, who, in minutes for June 27 "Resolved that the Faculty respectfully recommend to

continued on page 16

Three letters from Emma Mott

F. W. Iddings Secretary Board of Regents
University of North Dakota August 4, 1884
Sir:

Your letter with remaining credentials at hand. I will place the circulars wherever they may be likely to benefit the University. Next week the Walsh County Institute--teachers--will be held in this town, and I suppose the University will be well represented though there can be no harm in mentioning the matter here.

In this I will make a few suggestions, which, however, may not be new to you, at the same time I wish the Board to understand that it is at your invitation. You spoke of a Matron. Do I understand a figure-head, or a working housekeeper? Even though the pupils attend to their own rooms, a cook and dining room girls may be a necessity. Now in Ripon College, Wis., and Oberlin College, Ohio, many pupils are glad of an opportunity to pay their way in part, by performing light duties, such as preparing and waiting upon tables. Some such arrangement might tend to augment the number of pupils for the time and could be ruled out in more prosperous times. I had not less than 7 or 8 young ladies and misses, four of whom are teachers, who worked for their board in order to attend the Minto school last year, and I doubt not that some of them will try to enter the Preparatory Department of the University if the means can be found.

By a "working housekeeper" I mean one capable of ordering the meals and overseeing the work, and doing whatever occasion demands. The "help" would then stand thus: janitor and man of all work, combined; housekeeper and cook, combined, until increase of numbers demands both; and dining room assistants. I will here add that if it were necessary, until you could see a better way, I do not think my dignity as an instructor would be in any way compromised if I were to audit the bills of the commissary department as often as you deem best. Having cast my lot with the University for a time, all my energies will be exerted to make it a success, whenever and wherever they are demanded so long as compatible with my position. This I should not offer only under existing circumstances, wherein "what will it cost per annum" is the first question. I have omitted a "laundry woman" but she will be a necessity.

I fear you will make a mistake of you do not furnish the student rooms with at least bed-stead, wash-stand, sma'l table and 2 chairs. These may be cheap, and furnished by the quantity, competition will cheapen them.

Hoping that these few suggestions will be taken in the same spirit as given, and not that of presumptuous interference, I remain, Sincerely Yours, E. S. Mott.

February 23, 1885
Mrs. E. A. Thorp,

Yours at hand. I am very glad Nellie has told you. This I wanted to do long ago but she feared the effect on her mamma and promised to deal justly with me. This she has by no means done. I feel now that the true turning point in her character has come and if rightly dealt with she may be broken of a fault which otherwise may bring you untold trouble and disgrace. I do not know how much she may have told you but the thefts to which she has owned and articles returned are many.

That this is not the beginning of this fault possibly you know. The shock to me was very great. You know I had unlimited confidence in her or I would never have offered to assist her through the University or left the key to my room in her possession. She dashed it all away with her own hand and free will. I have been poorly paid.

Now as I said before if rightly handled you may yet save her, but she must be made to see the enormity of her fault and its probable consequences if she does not correct it. To condone it now without attaching some penalty is to ruin her. The way in which she calls on God to witness her innocence and then have to own and restore property is of itself shocking. To stir it publicly is only to brand her among thousands who otherwise would never know anything about it. It has all died out here now and a revival of it is not to be desired but, that I leave with you though I would rather help Nellie up than down. Nellie was dearer to me than any pupil I ever had, and I sincerely hope that being so young she may outlive this grievous fault.
Sincerely yours, E. S. Mott.

To the Board of Regents, UND May 18, 1885
Gentlemen:

I return the enclosed notice to you as an "estray." It has been long known to a majority of the Board of Regents and to the public that I have remained here contrary to my own desires in the matter for months, even before I sent in my resignation, and also that nothing could induce me to be a candidate for further University honors. You refused to accept my resignation tendered to you, and then sent to me a notice of preparation of which you know is but a waste of Territorial time, talent and money. Under the circumstances I can construe this movement into nothing less than intended insult and harm to me, and since another resignation might not ensure my present release from the general melee, I act for myself in declaring my position as "Lady Supervisor and Instructor" vacant from this date, May 18th, 1885. Yours truly, E. S. Mott. Allow me to propound one question, viz: if, in the light of your recent by-laws the term of office of the instructors in the University terminate with one year, by what authority or rule of diplomacy do you presume to draw a boundary line for that which never has been and never will be subject to your disposal, my future time. E. S. Mott.

NOTE: Four volumes of Henry V. Mott's diary are in the Orin G. Libby Manuscript Collection of the Univ. of North Dakota Library. Emma Mott's letter to Mrs. Thorpe is in pencil on two sheets of lined paper inside one of the diary volumes, presumably a draft copy. For information about the history of the Univ. of North Dakota, see Louis Geiger, University of the Northern Plains, A History of the University of North Dakota 1883-1958 (Grand Forks: The Univ. of North Dakota Press, 1958), and minute books of the State Board of Higher Education and University Faculty Minutes August 31, 1884 to June 9, 1906, in the University Archives. The photograph of Emma Mott and resident students (page 1) is printed in Geiger's book following page 164, and reproduced here with permission. This essay, in a slightly different form, will appear in a book to be published by the Univ. of Indiana Press and titled Read This Only to Yourself; Writings of Women in the Midwest, 1880-1910.

continued from page 14

the Board of Regents the appointment, at a salary not to exceed seven-hundred and fifty dollars for the first year, of a lady whose duties shall be to superintend the young ladies residing in the building and to give instruction in Elementary branches in the Preparatory Department, subject to the general direction of the Faculty." By hiring a new president at the old salary, and reducing the lady instructor's by $250 or 25%, it only cost the board an additional $500 to increase Merrifield's salary by a third and Montgomery's by twelve percent. As a parting insult to her, Emma Mott's position was considered overpaid.

It is even sadder to know with what high hopes her year at UND began. Emma Mott's letter accepting the appointment is written as graphically as her letter resigning from it. Had the men in charge included her energy and experience in their deliberations throughout a difficult year, a brave woman would not have been humiliated for her talents.

Henry Mott, Emma's husband, was first cousin to the suffrage leader Lucretia Mott, a connection that may be reflected in an astonishing entry in his journal.

March 15, 1906. Equality before the law. I lived too early to see it. One half of the race disfranchised, and we call ourselves enlightened. Bah! We are half barbarian yet. The right to say who and what shall govern our lives resting on no other foundation than the form of the procreative organs. I am heartily ashamed and humiliated to be thus forced to be classed among the usurpers.

Henry Mott's four-volume diary between 1899 and 1908 glances at Emma's private life, though we cannot know it well. His shame about women's lack of equality before the law shows strong sympathies for feminism, and nothing in the diary contradicts the impression that he held Emma in high esteem, although he seldom wrote in an emotional or even descriptive manner. "Wife had Encyclopedias delivered to her and she paid 9.75 therefor" (8-7-02). Much about her he did not think he had to say: "April 25, 1906. Anniversary of my marriage. How swiftly the years have flown. These have composed the best years of my life. Whatever I have accomplished worth while is embraced there."

Henry Mott lived only nine months after his fifty-sixth birthday. Although dying had been on his mind for years, his death stirred terrible sadness in Emma. She wrote at least as fiercely about his dying as she had about being fired from UND, with a novelist's objective eye for scene at the very moment she protests her own anguish.

May 15, 1909. Dr. Sutton came, and while they sat talking, Dr. beside the bed, the Death Angel came also. I had been leaning on the foot of the bed, after giving him two tiny pills by order of Dr. who had also given him a hypo injection at 9:15 pm. I sat down in front room with the stove obstructing sight of them. Almost immediately Dr. went out without stopping to say "Good night." The door hardly closed when a gasp reached my ear. One step and I was in sight of my loved one, but too late. He had entered in. I started to rub his hands but I knew that were futile, then I ran to the door and called "Dr.! Dr.! Come right back." He had gotten only in front of the next neighbor's door--it all happened so quickly--and instantly returned. I plead, "Do something for him, you must." He said, "No use, Mrs. Mott." I with a single stroke composed his face and it took on a look which I shall ever remember, an expression so familiar to me when he had been thinking on some life problems, a sort of quizzical smile that expected me to ask of him "What is it Harry?" And I asked it of him over and over but no response ever came. And I still am asking, "What would you say Harry, if you could speak?"

Emma Mott arranged an elaborate Masonic funeral, conducted by a long-time friend and pastor in Chicago, and she saw to the construction of a vault that met previously agreed-to precautions against her husband's being buried alive. She let several weeks go by before placing the body in the crypt, she left the coffin unclosed and a south window also open. She wrote like a practical mystic: "These precautions were unnecessary, but I kept my promise to the letter. Many times I went to the vault and lifting the cover saw and talked to him, but alas. No response came. The weather turning cold we thought best to enter his body into its crypt in order to have the cement harden before freezing."

To describe these funerary events she used journal pages immediately following Henry Mott's last entries. Painful as was her honest skepticism, she spelled it out anyway:

If I could only say and think "The Lord gave and the Lord taketh away," but I cannot. Over work and over worry did it, and so I have no refuge, no one on whom to cast my grief. "The Lord's will"? Never. He receives but does not take. He permits, he does not compel. We are poor moral agents and pay for our transgression of natural laws as well as of Divine laws. Bronchitis, rupture, heart failure, liver, all got in their work, and Vallie and I are alone. May God guide us to the right and to see and feel and know and do acceptably in his sight. God make my boy a man good in his sight. Help him to turn from evil and be worthy of thy counsel. Amen. Emma S. Mott.

That prayer closes Henry Mott's diaries.

Emma Mott used language as a weapon against a thieving student, against a mis-managed university administration, and when she could not resign herself to "the Lord's will," against herself as an ineffectual agent of destructive natural laws, the over-work and over-worry that got the better of her husband's heart, liver and lungs. She was as ruthless on herself as on anyone she thought had done her injury, and she was not kind in her manner of calling attention to an unjust or foolish act. She sounds proud of her own integrity and unwilling to protect other people's self-regard from her scorn.

Emma Mott also had more ambitious intellectual and social interests than were required of her where she found herself, and she showed that she was angry at the disparity between what she thought she might have made of herself and what her circumstances allowed, and she expressed that anger at cost. To some, she evidently gave the appearance of being crazed. To refuse to be agreeable is to seem a little mad. Her dilemma dramatizes women's traditional exhausting devising of strategies not to be mute. Forbidden to make known "wants and recommendations," yet expected to perform professionally, Emma Mott acted out a female morality nightmare. Everything she wrote was accurate and true, no one said otherwise, but that precisely was her fault. She was a passionate and complicated person, strong of will and weak in tact; witty, capable, learned, and a little fierce. She showed an old-fashioned derring-do, and a harsh impatience with more cautious souls. Times have changed of course, and even had Emma Mott persisted in university teaching, we might not now find all her values congenial, but it does us good to remember her.

Rural teaching is not safe

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Margery McCanna lived with her parents in the east, and she attended boarding school in Virginia, but every summer she returned to the farm of her uncle Charles McCanna, near McCanna, North Dakota, in Grand Forks County. From the time she was ten years old, Margery corresponded regularly with her uncle, who wrote to her about the daily routine of the farm--planting, harvesting, horses and dogs, and clearly Margery was interested in and knew a great deal about farm life. The passage that follows, however, is from a letter Charles McCanna wrote to his brother Reuben, Margery's father, objecting strenuously to her wanting to teach in a country school. Is he being fair? PLAINSWOMAN welcomes responses from readers. What was it like to teach in a rural school? Was it as bad as Charles McCanna says? Worse? Better? Write us about your experiences as a country school teacher. Photographs courtesy of the Picture Collection of the State Historical Society of North Dakota.

October 24, 1944

I was interested in that portion of your letter in which you mentioned Margery's desire to teach a country school in North Dakota. I can't think of anything which would be so likely to bring to an abrupt end all the love she ever had for this state as would a year of teaching a country school. She doesn't realize what a dirty, disagreeable job she would find it to be. In the first place, it isn't a very safe job as more of the girls have been attacked in that work than in all the others combined. She would not have a chance to teach in any but

small country schools, without college training. In all cases it is necessary to room and board with some farmer. In nine cases out of ten, the farmer who boards the teacher is in the poorest financial condition and has the poorest living accommodations--the filthiest homes and poorest board, with no modern conveniences of any nature. The teacher usually has to carry water from a well for her bath; so many of them don't bother to take baths. She usually has to go to school an hour before the children in order to build the fires and have the room hot when the children arrive. I believe that if she could get the exceptional school where she could find janitor service and find a modern home in which to live, Margery would still hate it more than she ever dreamed that she could dislike anything, as she would be thrown in constant association with types of people who would bore her to tears. . . . I fear that Margery would become so tired of the children around the house after school hours that she would hate the sight of those she would have to teach during the day. . . .If she were trained sufficiently to hold a teacher's job in a country town or village in this state, everything would be entirely different.

The life of the teacher in this village is not too unpleasant, even though she does the janitor work this year when there was no one else available. . . . [But] I am absolutely positive that she would not be as unhappy if she were to get a job as a potato handler in one of the Grand Forks dehydrating plants as she would be as a country school teacher in nine out of ten schools in the state. At least she could have a clean place in which to live when not at work.

continued from p. 11

During my months in the village, B. borrowed heavily from the banks and began construction on a new, very large tourist hotel on her property, each room with private bath and television. The hotel is based on Irish architectural plans and tourists are served two meals a day. The hotel was the focus of much gossip and interest in the village. Villagers were astounded by Mrs. B.'s latest innovation and new addition to her projects. Mrs. B. enhanced her attraction to tourists by using *menhirs* , or prehistoric flat burial stones, as benches in the garden, placing picturesque hay carts in strategic places, exhibiting antique Breton costumes, and having a $1,200 granite statue of a Breton woman exhibited in front of the hotel.

While Mrs. B. does many good deeds and successful ventures, she also distorts the truth to throw the best possible light on herself. When I first got to the village, she explained that she had "donated" some of her land to help enlarge the village cemetery: "One has to do what one can for the good of the village." The former mayor, however, told me that she did not give the field to the town outright, but exchanged it for another field in a different area of the village and got a good deal in the exchange.

HER FORMAL POLITICAL POWER

Mrs. B. wields considerable political power. For the last twelve years she has been elected to the *commune's* Council. People vote for her, according to my informants, because they feel they owe her a moral debt for favors she has done for them. The month I arrived in the village, she was asked to be the alternate to the deputy from her area of Brittany. If the deputy became minister, she would become deputy in his place. She had a week to decide. I asked Mrs. B. what her husband thought. She said that he was against her accepting because of their young daughter, only 4 at the time. The next election would be 6 years away and she would be too old then to accept the position. In the end, she refused the offer. She told me, "If I ever had to replace the deputy, it would mean being in Paris 5 days a week, with nightly political meetings, and I have a little daughter. There are many people who would love this honor and accept it and I don't want it, yet it is offered to me. The deputy wanted me as alternate as I would bring him many votes. It would mean resigning as vice president of the tourist bureau, it would get me too far away from the village and all the people I help," (that is, too far from her power base.)

On a number of occasions Mrs. B. tried to get me involved in her network of indebtedness. I think I made her uncomfortable with my presence in the village as representing an unpredictable foreign element of uncertain powers, and yet as a progressive force in the village she had to show her support for my work and my education. Such networks and relationships become very complicated and an anthropologist can't help becoming a part of the action and influencing village life. For example, she rented me a *gite*, normally unoccupied at that time of year, for only $40 a month. She often offered to lend me money if my stipend was late, or to let me postpone paying my rent (neither of which I did). She also offered me the use of her telephone and said I might give the phone number to my parents in case of an emergency, an offer I did accept. On one occasion, she brought a land surveyor to meet me who offered to let me use his copier.

Villagers have many and varied opinions about Mrs. B. They all recognize her hard work, tenacity, and will to succeed as an important aspect of her success, but not all feel warmly toward her. A member of the Municipal Council said, "She is overly nosey and pushy. She is difficult to work with because she always has to be the head of everything and the first in everything. She is very insensitive and thick-skinned and this saves her from feeling the irritation and anger of others." The word most frequently used by villagers to describe Mrs. B. is *tres debrouillard*, that is, ingenious, resourceful, smart, a hustler and a go-getter.

CONCLUSIONS

Mrs. B. is a strong, progressive force in the small Breton parish where she lives. She is also the chief link between many of the Breton-speaking peasants of the village and the French bureaucracy in Quimper, the nearest large city. What factors account for her formal and informal political power? Her personality--aggressive, risk-taking, resourceful, farseeing, opportunistic, very hard working--explains a lot. She does not hesitate to let others know what she has done in order to capitalize on it. She is her own public relations expert. She is willing to distort the truth at times to impress people and put herself in a good light.

She inherited her parents' farm, unusual for a woman in this area. This was the first stepping-stone she used to begin building a measure of wealth and power in the village. She has valuable personal tools--a car and telephone--which permit her to keep up her network of contacts and to assist people in need. She is available to everyone, and an innovative pioneer in the village. In sum, Mrs. B. is an extraordinary, forceful personality who would probably be a leader in any culture, a person difficult for many to like, but whose abilities are widely appreciated.

POSTSCRIPT 1981: Mrs. B. is still alive today and still politically active and influential. I am in close contact with a number of the village families and have no reason to believe that what was true in 1972 has changed greatly in 1981.

Marcie Parker has an MA in Anthropology and a Master's in Public Administration. She has worked in museum and college teaching, health care and social sciences and is currently coordinator of the Consortium on Gerontology, a statewide association of North Dakota colleges and universities to study problems of the elderly.

Tithing to the causes we care about--and especially to feminist issues--is something that many women (and men who care about equality) are adopting as routine. Now that such basic rights as reproductive freedom are endangered by legislation that would outlaw abortion, and women's self-help projects are likely to be denied the few government grants they may have had, the distribution of our personal dollars is even more important.

Withholding the percentage of our taxes that pay for military excesses, and distributing them to de-funded programs in our own communities, is one idea that women are discussing. There may be a major tax revolt in the making.

Gloria Steinem, founding editor of "Ms." Magazine.
Ms., August 1981.

The study of women proceeds

by Sandra Donaldson

Ten years ago as a graduate student I was teaching and digging in for doctoral exams. In the foggy distance ahead was a dissertation, on Walter Pater, I thought--the celibate 19th century Oxford don who wrote about appreciating art sensually, about "death-in-life," and about adolescence. In teaching I chose political novels about the war and stories about children and old people. Clearly, I was trying to avoid sex, that staple of 20th century fiction.

I now see how much I was a product of training in male-centered institutions, where few women were graduating or getting college-level jobs, but many were tolerated as useful teaching assistants. No wonder I avoided books having to do with sex, written as they were by men with a perspective that I did not share, understand, or particularly find worth thinking about. The few women included in anthologies and course reading lists seemed grudgingly admitted: while they could not ignore Gertrude Stein, they felt obliged to joke about her size and haircut, this being the early 70s.

But the women's movement was engaging my attention powerfully. A woman student asked why I had not included any women writers in the class I taught--well, I didn't know any, or worse, *like* any. But the next semester I signed up for the first graduate seminar in women writers offered at the University of Connecticut. Plath, Lessing, Oates, Austen--where had they been all my life? Where had *I* been all my life? Several of us drove up to the University of Massachusetts for monthly sessions of talking with other women about books that were important in our lives and asking why most literature was not.

Five years later Pater no longer interested me as a dissertation subject. An advisor suggested Elizabeth Barrett Browning. My retort was, "But she's a sentimental love poet. I'm a free woman." I discovered I was wrong on both counts: that she had written a verse novel, was an intensely political person, and sustained a successful independent career despite her famous invalidism. As for myself, I was teaching women's courses. In this manner, my personal life and professional life came together, and brought me into political awareness.

What happened to me in the 70s happened to many other women and to Women Studies: the personal became political. As women's awareness of inequity and exclusion grew, they demanded fair treatment and inclusion, demands entirely in keeping with institutional aims of higher education. In fact, excluding the female half of the population became illegal.

My own efforts now, ten years after I first started, include, on the political side, initiating a committee at the University of North Dakota to formalize Women Studies here, and on the more personal, exploring motherhood, that crucial but little-studied area avoided by many academic women. The serious study of women proceeds.

Math problems continued from p. 7

expression when maybe five would be enough.) One should introduce contemporary topics such as population growth, radioactivity, and, by all means, use calculators and computers, which require knowing more math, not less. Give students take-home projects to work on. (How much water is used when you flush your toilet 10 times a day for 50 years? How much heat do you save in winter when you don't drain your bathtub until after the water has cooled?) Also eliminate undue emphasis on speed in doing problems. Students who have math anxiety should be taught in small sections where they can feel free to get personal attention from instructors. There are some very good GTAs working in the math lab to give individual attention, but many students put things off until it is too late.

We should be teaching a course in the history of mathematics in which women as well as men mathematicians are described, in their relationship to the development of the "Queen" of the sciences. Perhaps a short course or colloquium on women in mathematics would help. We should try to dispel the notion that "mathematically inclined" persons are cold, weird creeps who can do amazing computations in their heads. It is not so. They are just ordinary people who enjoy working problems which at first glance look hard but interesting.

ATTENTION HOME WORKERS:

Patricia Lazarus, of the Plainswoman staff, is preparing an article about businesses run by women in their home, as well as a directory of such businesses. If you run a business from your home or know someone who does, please write (describing what you do) to Patricia Lazarus, Plainswoman, P.O. Box 8027, Grand Forks ND 58202.

South Dakota: Storm of 1888

After the snow, we trekked long
minutes of frosted breath; finally
a human form: like iced-glass
Jeremy sparkled in the ditch.

In December then, '88, Jeremy's
young widow moved from their
logged house and we laid Jeremy on
his own kitchen table. We prayed
for him in church.

He lay there all winter and
when the skating pond began
to crack under blunt skate
blades, we fetched Jeremy,
all soft, as if he'd
just left us.

The ground was muddy too
from spring thaw tricklings
and in May '89
Jeremy's widow cried
as we put him
down.

Mary Pinard
Yellow Springs, Ohio.

Prominent Plainswoman: Carol Renner

"Right now I'm working as a radio reporter/anchor for WDAY radio in Fargo, North Dakota. My beats are the Minnesota courts and the federal courts. I also pinch hit on the Fargo Police, Cass County Commission and Cass County and District courts. I usually report in the morning and anchor from 1:30 to 5:00 PM." So goes the day for Carol Renner, named one of this year's "Top Ten College Women" by *Glamour* magazine. The magazine selects ten women across the nation for outstanding scholarship, leadership, and community activities, awarding each a $500 cash prize and an expense paid trip to New York City.

Renner also was among 15 journalism students from around the country chosen this past spring to serve in Washington D.C. as a Sears Congressional intern. She worked in the office of Representative Dan Mica of Florida, doing political research, writing speeches, and assisting with production of a weekly television public affairs segment about Congress.

A native of Richardton, North Dakota, Carol Renner was a 1981 Honors graduate at the University of North Dakota. She co-anchored the 1980 election for KNOX radio in Grand Forks.

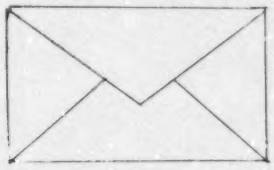
As part of her honors thesis at UND, Carol Renner produced and hosted a radio documentary series for KFJM AM-FM, "A Study of Women in Broadcast News in North Dakota." The series is based on 65 hours of interviews with women broadcasters throughout the state, exploring such topics as sexual harassment and discrimination, education, the "queen bee syndrome," and advice for professionals. (See notice in PLAINSWOMAN for June, 1981.)

--Gerri Sayler

PLAINSWOMAN welcomes nominations for "Prominent Plainswoman" notice in future issues.

Jean Lee
Founding Editor
of Plainswoman

Letter, continued from page 8



sometimes are told that they do not belong in graduate school, that (although they already have earned a bachelor's degree) they should consider a secretarial career. As to employment, every study I have seen indicates that female faculty members, in the aggregate, do not receive salaries or promotions commensurate with their male colleagues, all other factors being equal. What I have read about women in the business world leads to the same conclusion. Equal opportunity under the law has made discrimination on the basis of sex illegal, yet many forms of subtle and not-so-subtle sex bias still exist.

In addition to these problems for women in higher education today, there are others that are personal in nature. The first is a malady that psychologists call the impostor syndrome. Members of both sexes experience it, but apparently women do so in greater numbers and with greater severity. She who suffers from the impostor syndrome has sometimes overwhelming awareness of what she does *not* know, which can rob her of any satisfaction about what she *does* know. Moreover, when such a person is successful, she may shrink from recognizing the work and effort that led to the achievement and instead attribute her success to external forces such as pure luck.

A second problem is perfectionism. A certain amount of it no doubt helps in any endeavor requiring diligence, accuracy, and commitment. But excessive perfectionism is another matter. Since no one can possibly turn in a flawless academic performance--there is always *something* that can be improved--the perfectionist may work harder and enjoy the college years less because she cannot reach an unattainable goal.

The impostor syndrome and perfectionism can have other undesirable consequences. Each involves fear of failure and produces feelings of inadequacy. Either can lead a woman to minimize her abilities and accomplishments, to be quiet and timid in college courses, to accept an unchallenging or unrewarding job upon graduation.

Finally, for women with family responsibilities, the time and dedication required to earn a college degree can give rise to feelings of frustration and guilt. Schedules may need to be juggled, projects postponed. Other family members may be called upon to help more around the house. At particularly busy times, such as during examination week, the female student may be more preoccupied with analytic geometry, Elizabethan drama, or adolescent psychology than either she or the rest of the family would wish.

But I am convinced that the student mother or wife need not fear that her college or university activities are detrimental to family life. An academic schedule is seldom as rigid as full-time employment. In my case, there has not been one semester when I have had to leave home before the boys in the morning. Rarely have I had to provide child care for them because of late afternoon classes, or return to the university library in the evening.

In his recently published book *At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present*, Carl Degler argues that a profound tension has existed between women's development as individuals and their role within the American family. A woman who is working on a college degree is a prime candidate for feeling that tension, but it can be resolved. During the two years that I have been in graduate school, my sons have grown in self-confidence, independence, and happiness. Our family life has never been better.

"There is a Word"

Matilda Joslyn Gage (1826-1898) was a founder and member of the National Woman Suffrage Association. With Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony she was one of the authors of *History of Woman Suffrage*, and on her own wrote *Woman, Church and State*, published in 1893 and reissued by Persephone Press, Watertown, MA 1980, with an introduction by Sally Roesch Wagner.

The film memoir takes its title from Matilda Gage's motto: "There is a word sweeter than mother, home or heaven. That word is liberty." It is narrated from her speeches and writings and shows photographs and other visual images of her militant political activities. Her words were strong. She addressed the South Dakota Constitutional Convention like this: "In Dakota, grevous wrong is done to women. . . .While men from every nation are welcome to our magnificent prairie as equals, it is humiliating to the women of this territory to be treated as inferiors. . . .Remove the word male from your constitution and accord to the women of this territory all the rights, privileges and immunities that men claim for themselves."

Matilda Joslyn Gage had special connections to the Dakotas as well as to Syracuse, New York, where she lived. In the 1880's her son T.C. moved to Aberdeen South Dakota, and her daughter Helen lived there also, married to Frank Baum, the author of The Wizard of Oz books. The feminist inclinations in these books is at least partly attributable to Matilda Gage's presence in the family. Another daughter, Julia, homesteaded in Lamoure County, North Dakota, with her husband Frank Carpenter, and later moved to Fargo.
based on research by Sally Wagner with the cooperation of family descendants.

There is a Word, 16mm color film documentary. Rental $40, sale $375. Unity Productions, 620 15th Ave. SE, Aberdeen, SD 57401 (204-458-8916).

The Abortion Fund

1801 K Street, N.W. Suite 200 Washington, D.C. 20006

On June 30, 1980, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the government is not required to fund indigent abortions through Medicaid. Abortions are still legal and available to women who can pay. A fund is now being established to assist indigent women who choose to terminate a pregnancy, with the initial goal of having $5 million on hand by November 1, 1981. (200,000 people giving an average of $25 would realize the goal.)

Any woman who holds, or is entitled to, a Medicaid card is eligible, and will be asked to contribute $25 toward her abortion, and will be encouraged though not required to repay the entire cost over a period of 48 months. The abortion is performed by the physician or abortion clinic selected by the indigent woman and must contribute a minimum of 20% of the abortion cost. The Fund will approve payment only to those climics and physicians who are licensed by state law and who meet the standards of quality care set forth by the National Abortion Federation. Only first trimester (12 weeks) abortions will be funded.

buffalo chips

Novelty jewellry--while it lasts

The Wall Street Journal reports that the Republican National Committee canceled an order for thousands of lapel pins that were to symbolize the Reagan budget cut program. The pins were to be a miniature pair of scissors, until it was discovered that the novel idea already was in use. It is the symbol of vasectomies.

When Phyllis Schlafly talked on the Phil Donahue show about virtuous women being immune to sexual harassment, she was wearing a pin that said "I am a lady." May we suggest a thoughtful gift for that troublesome anti-ERA friend on your early Christmas list? Buy matched pins: "I am a lady" for one side, and little scissors for the other.

Somewhere you can still learn manners

Mrs. South Dakota and Mother of the Year, Bernice Johnson, who also owns and directs a modeling agency and charm school in Sioux Falls, conducted a Seminar on Personal Development for Women in Business and the Professions on July 16 in Madison, South Dakota. Also on the program was Iva May Larsen, director of the secretarial and office education program at Dakota State College. According to an advance notice in the Madison, S.D. Daily Leader for July 6, 1981, the seminar included "presentations on business manners, confidence and poise in business; relationships with other women and men in business; attire; and professional advancement and upward mobility." The seminar was supported by a grant from the Karl Mundt Historical and Educational Foundation, Robert McCaughey, executive director.

perspective: "Be good, sweet maid"

"Be good, sweet maid, and let who will, be clever" was popular advice in the eighteenth century, and although you don't say the words out loud in this day and age, women's relationship to education still is full of contradictions. The evolution/creationist argument over school texts is one example showing how suspicious some people are of education. When it comes to higher education for women, women themselves are not sure. Look what happened when Eve ate the apple that gave knowledge she was not supposed to have. According to the myth, knowing is the same as doing evil, and "good" women apparently are good mainly because they don't know any better. Most people agree that an educated man is no less "a man" than the eighth grade dropout. If anything, the prestige of professions (scientist, lawyer, doctor) makes a man appear more masculine. But a woman with a doctor's degree or lawyer's license runs the risk of being thought un-feminine. The easiest compromise for an educated woman is to work herself into occupations as nearly like supposed feminine roles as possible: teaching, nursing, being a secretary or airline attendant. According to Newsweek Magazine, when government officials interviewed Sandra O'Connor for a Supreme Court appointment, she served them salmon salad she had prepared herself and they were reassured. One doubts that a male candidate would have been expected to demonstrate that he could change a tire.

The relationship between women and education has been seen not only as a moral issue but as a political one also. Education in our society is the way to public life (though no guarantee of success), meaning managerial work, the professions, government service and political office. But such public participation, of course, contradicts the view that women ought to confine themselves to home and the private sphere. Women, if they marry "well," are able to decorate the power of men. (Diana Spencer, now Princess of Wales and future Queen Consort of England, left school at age 16.) But for women who do not look to the status of wife to a public man as a career, education means everything. Women, then, turn to education to provide the way to economic and emotional independence from men, to entry into the public world in their own right, and most often of all, to earn a living.

Thus although education at the college level always has been crucially important to women's achievement, their education also has been fraught with complications. In agricultural regions these contradictory pressures have been especially severe, for women's intention to proceed more or less on their own goes against the grain of the cooperative inter-dependence of an agricultural enterprise. The subordinate relationship of the hard working farm "wife" to the authority of her husband/farmer has a clearer economic and social reality than urban two-career marriages. Even women with off-farm jobs think of their income as supporting the farm, not themselves or the family directly. So, whether or not a particular woman is involved in running a farm, the idea that she ought to contribute to the farm work of which her husband is in charge is strong enough in rural areas to color attitudes toward higher education for all women.

Possibly as a result, people in the plains and midwestern states have not by and large encouraged independent achievement for women. There is not here the strong tradition that one finds in New England, for instance, of women's colleges, women's organizations other than auxiliaries to men's groups, or women's philanthropic projects. Jennette Rankin of Montana and Meridel LeSeuer of Minnesota are national public figures, but few other women from the region have been.

Life stories of some of the women in North Dakota who sought higher education are probably typical for the region, and looking at the settlement period for the beginnings of traditions may illuminate the lives women are leading now. In spite of the fact that the decades at the turn of the twentieth century were rather promising for women's education, years that saw the founding of women's colleges and increasing admittance of women at universities, there are virtually no examples during the settlement period in North Dakota of women who entered professional and public life and continued those careers until retirement. Elsie Hadley White, for instance, earned a B.A. at Earlham College and an M.A. in mathematics at the University of Michigan, the first woman to do so there. But her career as a mathematician stopped after a single year teaching at Valley City College, where she married Frank White, who in 1902 was elected state governor. Although Elsie White achieved state and national office in the Federated Women's Clubs, administrative activities primarily complemented her husband's public career (he eventually became U.S. Treasurer).

It is hard to say why it was that women who spent their adult lives in North Dakota did not consistently practice their profession. North Dakota, and the region generally, in its early history resisted profiting from the talents of educated women. The story of Emma Mott described in this issue, hired as "Lady Instructor" during the first year of the University of North Dakota, is undoubtedly typical. When feminist scholars of higher education for women have looked at the history of colleges and universities from the point of view of women's participation, they find a long procession of Emma Motts, making present-day affirmative action cases rather lose their novelty.

The uneasy relationship between women and higher education cuts two ways. (For that matter, the un-feminine argument has been countered, even by some feminists, by saying that educated women make better mothers.) More serious has been the reluctance of educated women to risk leadership in behalf of women. True, agriculturally based habits of thinking do not encourage women's leadership in politics, the professions, or the work force. Nevertheless one observes here little resistance among women themselves. Talented women have left the area, and those who stay, even after struggling for their education, revert to quietism. For instance, Cora Smith, for whom a dormitory is named on the University of North Dakota campus, was in UND's first graduating class of 1890. She then took a degree in medicine at Boston University, and returned to Grand Forks to practice medicine and to teach women's physical education (calisthenics, drill, and marching). Later she became prominent in the suffrage movement, but that was in Seattle. Typically, educated women in the region either leave, or if they stay, advance themselves inconspicuously. Few risk change for all women.

True, public life is difficult. It is fashionable to feel

sorry for wives of public men: poor Betty Ford taking to drugs and drink, or Joan Kennedy and Patricia Nixon and what they must have had to put up with. What is overlooked, however, is the large opportunity for public good such positions offer to women, and yet Eleanor Roosevelt is one of a very few presidents' wives to act upon her extraordinary store of influence. In North Dakota, Barbara Olson, whose husband Allen Olson is state governor, has chosen not to be political, as she puts it. Barbara Olson is a university graduate and former teacher, but now is making public statements rejecting public activity. According to an interview by Laurie Boeder (Grand Forks Herald, July 22, 1981), "North Dakota's first lady is rarely seen at political events, clinging to her husband's arm, sitting through dry dinner speeches, or riding in parades. She is usually home with the kids." Her concern that her three children age 10-15 have as "normal" a life as possible is one of her reasons.

A second is "the couple's relationship. She rarely advises him, and they don't talk politics, or work, at home. 'He's been thinking about it, talking about [it] all day," she said. "When he comes home, he doesn't want to talk about it again with me." She is on boards of mental health and drug abuse programs, but otherwise maintains "'I'm not political. I've never been political,'" (and, if the interviewer is to be believed, appears to think that political activity primarily means dinners and parades). Unfortunately, for a woman in her position, such apparent non-political posing has to be seen as itself political. As a governor's wife Barbara Olson can't help being in the public eye, and whatever she does makes far more impression on people than what other women do. The message that she is giving, and it is political whether she claims so or not, is that all women ought to stay home minding children and soothing husbands.

Of course well brought up children and stable marriages are important, and both responsibilities, in most families, fall chiefly to women. But in the everyday lives of all but twelve percent of us, there are other things too. Barbara Olson's concern for persons mentally and chemically ill also is commendable, but again, safe, and not enough. She is missing in action, one might say, or depriving the rest of us of the potential power of her position. What all women need to do more strenuously, especially in agricultural areas, is not only to find opportunities for leadership, but to muster the ingenuity and daring to take full advantage of whatever possibilities do come up.

We can't be "good" unless we are clever too. Barbara Olson and other women like her--educated and in positions of potential influence--owe it to others and to themselves to flex muscles toward the public good, especially the good of other women. It can hardly be news, one might add, that generations of children, and husbands as well, have thrived in the household of good *and* clever, and publicly useful, women. EH

NOTE: Current readings on women's higher education are in Women on Campus: The Unfinished Liberation (Change Magazine editors, New Rochelle, NY, New Tower, 1975); and Harvard Educational Review, Special Issues on Women and Education 50 (February 1980). Signs: A Journal of Women in Culture and Society also regularly reviews books and magazines covering topics ranging from sexism in teacher education textbooks to statistics on which professions women choose to study and why or to debates on coed vs. same sex schools for women. Of particular interest are the historical essays on women's struggles to gain admission to American colleges and universities in the last 150 years.

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Calendar

September 24: Concordia College, Moorhead, MN. **A Charis Seminar, "Feminism and Biblical Studies."** Lectures by Dr. Phyllis Trible, professor at Union Theological Seminary and author of *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*. Seminar subject: "The Image of God Female and Male." Topics include Garden of Eden, female imagery for God, portrayals of women in the Old Testament. Fee $10. Send registration to Dr. James B. Hofrenning, CHARIS Ecumenical Center, Concordia College, Moorhead, MN 56560.

September 25-26: Bismarck Junior College Campus, Bismarck, North Dakota. **Today's Women: Variety and Options, an all-state conference for men and women.** Lectures and workshops on relationships between women and men at work, including such topics as stress management, sexual harassment, career advancement, grass roots politics. Two showings of the film "Rosie the Riveter." Fee $10. Write to Community Services Division, Bismarck Junior College, Bismarck, ND 58501.

September 30: Program proposals due for conference next June 11-12 at the Ramada Inn, Grand Forks, North Dakota, on **Women's Centering: Strategies for Survival.** Submit a 150-200 word description to Lois Christal, Office of Women's Programs, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks ND 58202 (701-781-4300).

October 8-9: Grand Forks, North Dakota. **Eating Disorders: Diagnosis and Treatment.** Conference on anorexia and bulimia, featuring Dr. Richard Pyle and Dr. Elke Eckert, psychiatrists, University of Minnesota. Fee $70; $35 student. Write Cynthia Schaefer, Center for Human Development, Grand Forks, ND 58201 (701-775-0525).

October 29-30: University of North Dakota, Memorial Union, Grand Forks. **Writers' Conference in Children's Literature.** A Conference to acquaint parents, teachers, librarians and writers with three prominent children's authors and their works, and to help beginning as well as working writers develop the specific skills needed to write successfully for young people. Authors featured on the program include Mary Calhoun *(Katie John, Wobble the Witch Cat* and 40 other books); Sid Fleischman (professional magician and author of *McBroom and the Great Race* and other books and film scripts); and Dorothy Haas (children's book editor for Rand McNally Co. and author of *The Bears Upstairs* and *Poppy and the Outdoors Cat*.) Participants in the Writing Skills Workshop may submit, no later than October 10, one manuscript of up to 2000 words for evaluation by conference faculty. Send manuscripts and requests for program or other information to Emily Johnson, Conference Coordinator, RR 2, Box 83, Grand Forks ND 58201.

November 1: Proposals due for the third **Conference on the History of Women**, sponsored by WHOM (Women Historians of the Midwest), to be held at the College of St Catherine, St. Paul, MN, **April 30-May 2.** Those who wish to present papers or organize sessions for the meeting should send two copies of a one-page abstract to the Conference on the History of Women, College of St. Catherine, St. Paul MN 55105.

January 31: Final date for submitting manuscripts for an orchestral composition of medium length to the **Fourteenth Sigvald Thompson Composition Award Competition,** established to stimulate and encourage the writing and performance of orchestral works by promising American composers. Open to any American citizen. Award: $1,500 plus premiere performance by the Fargo-Moorhead Symphony. Write FM Symphony, Box 1753, Fargo ND 58107.

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